

This is BILK # 71 for May 1996. Bilk appears bi-monthly and is published by Ulrich Magin - Fribolinstraße 5 - 74321 Bietigheim-Bissingen - Germany. Subscriptions are 15 DM for Europe and 20 DM for the rest of the world.

#### LEVIATHAN

● Lake Van, Turkey: The monster of Lake Van continued to appear in the press. For several months, the Stuttgarter Zeitung's correspondent Astrid Frevel reported on March 23, 1996, p. 102, a new attraction could lure tourists to Lake Van, hoteliers hope. The monster is between 20 and 25 m long and has already been spotted by the province's gouverneur. An amateur researcher lay on the shore for 1.5 months in hope of getting a film of the creature, when he finally managed to film the thing, he was able to see the "blurred and out of focus images" for 40 000 dollars. The film allegedly shows a fountain of water blown up by the monster. The paper quotes several zoologists who examined the film. One thought it definitely showed "a moving creature", a second expert said he could only discern "an object moving in the water or a swimming creature". A group of divers that searched the 450 m deep lake returned without results. Parliament has now established a commission to research the monster. Among the explanations are that it is only a husso-husso-fish (offered by "an ex-actor and biologist"), while locals firmly believe it to be a "harmless monster". Already souvenirs depicting the monster are on sale. Supporters of the local soccer team sing a song about the monster. As the region had previously used water sports, ancient Armenian churches, prehistoric ruins and Mt. Ararat, there is now the official idea to market the region with the monster. Because of the Kurd's fight against their Turkish suppressors, tourism has decreased considerably around Lake Van. Lake Van, called "a sea" by the locals, worries environmental experts for reasons quite different from the new monster: the water surface of Lake Van rises steadily, 3.5 m in the last 28 years. The Lake destroys not only the shoreline roads, but also the swamplands around it, such endangering the habitat of water birds.

● Loch Ness: Some new sightings of the Loch Ness monster are reported in Andreas Trottmann's "Loch Ness Newscipping Service", vol. 2, No. 1 (Les Pretresses, 1586 Vallamand VD, Switzerland) - On March 7, 1996, schoolbus driver Jimmy Burnett saw Nessie twice while on duty. At 8.20, he saw "something in the water" when he came down the hill from Abriachan. 20 minutes later, the thing was still there, so he stopped his bus and told the pupils. "Although it was a good distance away there was a ripple in the water and a hump was visible." Eilidh Barr, 11-year-old passenger, told the Inverness Courier (March 8, 1996): "We saw a single hump in the middle of some ripples (across the water towards Dores). We did not see a head, but as we were high up on the hill we had a good view of the loch." It is strange that the monsters stays on the surface for 20 minutes or more when no-one has a camera, but surfaces only for seconds whenever somebody like the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau is there with telephoto lenses. Perhaps a trained researcher could have identified the monster in this case. Andreas also covers older sightings from September and October 1992, when the creature was seen two times within a week.

● Miami, USA: This is one that is hard to classify. I have noted in recent Bilk the large numbers of aquatic humanoids seen in Puerto Rico, which appears to be in a grip of UFO hysteria, or perhaps it is only Ufologist Jorge Martin, who is the only source for these mass sightings. Now, in a more traditional vain, a creature called Chupacabras (goatsucker) is seen all over Puerto Rico and depicted as a kind of creature from the Black Lagoon, with some characteristics of abducting greys mixed in. More info in Fortean Times 85, p. 9 (pictures) and INFO Journal 74, p. 2 & 50. Obviously this is a complex situation, with old folklore now being seen within the UFO framework, while the traditional ideas about goat killing demons survive along with the technological interpretation. But, according to a short story in the "taz", 21 March 1996, p. 9, two dozen goats and chicken have been killed at Sweetwater, near Miami, USA. The Latin American population fears that the "Chupacabra" (goat vampire) is on the loose. Here it is described as "a mixture of dog and iguana", somewhat different from the more human one on Puerto Rico. Ron Magill, of Miami Zoo, has investigated the cases and found dog prints near the killing sites, so he assumes a feral dog is to blame. I assume that the stories were imported from Puerto Rico to Florida, so where will be the next Chupacabra panic? Also, is it a form-shifting demon, or does a clear-cut

idea of how he looks exist, and it is only shaped as circumstances demand - more humanoid in UFO hysterical Puerto Rico, dog-like in Miami, because dog prints were near the killings. I think we can be sure this saga will continue.

● Bibliography: Lake Van monster (Fortean Times 85, p. 8) -- 10ft catfish in River Endau, Malaysia in June 1995 (Fortean Times 85, p. 12) -- review of "Out of the Shadows" which includes sections on the Bunyip (INFO Journal 74, p. 52-53) -- review of Shuker: Dragons (INFO Journal 74, p. 56)

#### ISIS

● Short notes: A 2400 year old "river god" with the ears and horns of a bull has been found during excavations in Rome, Italy (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 29 Feb 1996, p. 11) -- During excavations of a Roman villa at Loukos, Greece, a marble statue of a nereid dating from the 5th cen BC, has been discovered (Welt March 11,96, p.10)

#### LEVIATHAN

● Notes: Out-of-place crocodiles in Australia - related to local sea serpent reports? (Fortean Times 85, p. 26-27) -- Loch Long, Scotland, conger attack (Fortean Times 85, p. 12)

#### KRAKEN

● New Zealand: Steve O'Shea, a New Zealand marine biologist, is out in his research ship "Tangaroa" to fish for architeuthis princeps at the Chatham Rise, a submarine plateau 800 m below the ocean surface off the east coast of New Zealand. In mid-January 1996, he caught an 8 m, 1 t male giant squid 500 km from the island. He had already caught two more female architeuthis in the same month. One of them was 20 m long and captured in only 300 m depth. The Chatham Rise is a true heaven for giant squids, O'Shea explains. Although the largest was found only 300 m below the surface, he expects to make most of his catches in 1000 m of depth. Long report, also quoting Clyde Roper and some earlier giant squid stories, in Focus 9/1996, p. 146-150. Call my cynical, but just imagine that one month of fishing in the deep sea of the Pacific Ocean produced three real sea monsters, while 50 plus years of research in the much much much smaller Loch Ness has produced simply nothing. If cryptozoology is about real animals, why do they never get results like this?

#### USO

● Abduction by extraterrestrials at Lake Champlain, the monster lake (Fortean Times 85, p. 61) -- the sighting of a UFO over SAN Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina's monster lake, with many details, in INFO Journal 74, p. 32-33  
● Meanwhile, Loch Ness has also received UFO visitors. In February 1996, strange lights were spotted over the BLack Isle and over Ullapool (the latter dismissed as a publicity balloon for the "Loch Ness" movie). Other witnesses were situated in Inverness and Westhill. The sightings continued for two weeks, and generally describe "circular pulsating lights". Local astronomers offered the thesis it might be planets. (Inverness Courier, 6 Feb, 13 Feb, 9. Feb, 12. March, 20 Feb 1996, reprinted in Trottmann's "Loch Ness Newscipping Service") The reports sound like observations of light beams projected onto low clouds by sky trackers, the new disco/fairground attraction that already constitutes about 50% of German UFO reports. Or extraterrestrial researchers, tired of abducting humans, have finally decided to look into this lake monster business. Will the next UFO report be from Lake Van? Stay tuned...

#### MARINE LIFE

● Whale strandings: 33 grind whales stranded at Farwell Spit, South Island, New Zealand. 5 died, and 27 were kept alive (doesn't add up to 33!). One year before, 30 grind whales stranded at the same place, and all were saved. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 15 Feb 1996, p. 9) // In January 1996, a sperm whale stranded in Jutland, Danemark. (Stuttgarter Nachrichten 21 March 96, p. 12; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 21. March, p. 10; Süddeutsche Zeitung 21. March, p. 12) The whale was so full of poisonous chemicals like mercury that authorities were baffled as to how dispose it. (Stuttgarter Zeitung 23 March 96, p. 24) // In March, another 16 sperm whales stranded at Romö, Danemark, on the 27th. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 28 March 1996, p. 9; Welt, same date, p. 10; Frankfurter Rundschau, same, p. 36; Stuttgarter Zeitung, same, p. 16; Stuttgarter Nachrichten, same, p. 8)

This was another Bilk, I hope you liked it. The next one will have an assortment of animal attacks and the usual departments.